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P.5

AP English Language

The Crucible Anticipation / Reaction Guide

1. Confessing to a crime you didn’t commit in order to avoid punishment is wise.

I do not agree with this statement. If you confess to a crime you did not commit you are not only lying to yourself to avoid punishment but also to everyone around you. Why would you even place yourself in that type of situation? If you want to be wise do not confess to a crime you did not commit, if you are doing it to protect someone so they will not get the punishment is wrong. You are not only placing yourself in a situation, that once you are in it there is no way out, it could possibly ruin your entire life. Also if you have these beliefs that lying is wrong (which almost everyone does) and you should not do it to protect someone else, you are going against your own beliefs, so you are not only lying to people around you but also to yourself. Lying will almost never get you anywhere in life. Mark Twain once said that “If you tell the truth, you don’t have to remember anything.” I one hundred percent agree with this quote. Once you start lying, you almost always continue to say lies and then you have to remember about all the lies you have said so no one catches you in your own lie. Lying is actually pretty hard to do and once you get used to lying all the time and you have learned to keep up with your lies you are basically known as a compulsive liar. Most people who start to say lies and believe their own lies becomes sort of like a lifestyle for them. They learn to live with the lies they have created and have no problem with the outcome of their lies (as long as it is a good one). But, saying the truth is better than saying lies (but who doesn’t know that?) You do not have to remember something that you said when you say the truth, but when you say a lie you have to remember it, just so the next lie you say matches with the previous lie you told. Small lies almost always lead to bigger lies that are harder to control. Once that one person catches you in your own lie, it is going to be tough to get them to understand and to actually believe you once you have already said all these lies. Honestly, no one wants to believe a liar if they are trying to say the truth (if they ever decide to tell the truth). Also why would you even confess to a crime you did not commit to protect someone else? Would you actually protect someone in a crime that could potentially ruin your entire life? Would that person do the same for you? Whatever the punishment is could lead you into a lot of problems and ruin your life and it will be much harder to get yourself out of that problem. The truth will always prevail and when it does it is going to be harder to explain to everyone that you lied to protect someone to avoid punishment.

2. The difference between right and wrong is clear

I strongly disagree with this statement. The difference between right and wrong is not clear. Everyone has their own values and morals on what they believe to be right and wrong. For example if someone believes the idea of abortion is right, because of their values, that does not mean that everyone else believes that abortion is the right thing to do. The concept of right and wrong is an opinion of someone, if you think something is right and the next person thinks it is wrong it is their own opinion. Everyone has their own opinions on what they believe to be right and wrong. Another example may also be the death penalty law. Most people think that killing someone who killed someone is the right thing to do to get justice for that victim because they think murdering someone is wrong; however they do not fully understand the concept of the death penalty law. If they think killing the murderer to receive justice for the victim is right, those people who agreed to have the murderer on death road are also murderers. If you actually think about it, this contradicts itself, killing someone who killed someone also makes you a killer which does not agree with your original moral judgment on murder. Not everyone will have the same beliefs as you which are what makes the difference between right and wrong unclear. Children are also a perfect example of why the different between right and wrong is not clear. Majority of children beneath the age of ten do not fully understand why something is wrong. They need their parents’ moral judgment to explain to them that an action they did is wrong and why it is wrong. They have not fully developed the mentality to be able to see the difference between right and wrong. Most children just believe everything they do is the right thing but then their parents somewhat make them realize why half the things they do is wrong. Also based on the circumstances you are in and who is around you, your opinion on right and wrong can change.

3. It is better to die for what you believe in rather than to lie to save your life

I do not agree nor disagree with this statement. I am neutral on this statement. Depending on your values and what you believe then it would be better to die for what you believe in rather than to lie and save your own life. Unless, depending on the circumstances than it would probably be right to lie and save your own life. Although it also depends on the severity of the scenario, would it actually be right to die for your beliefs or lie to save your life. This is also an opinion of someone, just because I think that you should do what feels right when placed in certain situations does not mean that someone else will have the same belief as I do. For example, for your particular religion, if you are held at gunpoint and asked to either proclaim or deny your faith, and you deny your faith in front of everyone you know just to save your own life, their opinions on you will change. They will all think that you are a coward and hypocrite for denying your faith to save your own life. This scenario can be debated in many ways, but like I said this is the opinion of someone and their own beliefs. Another example could be Martin Luther King who was a leader of the Civil Rights movement. King was killed in Memphis in 1968 while he was protesting against black sanitary public works employees. In this situation Martin Luther King was fighting for the rights that they deserved. By protesting for their rights King knew what would happen to him one day that he would eventually be killed by someone who did not support the same rights as him and other civil rights movement leaders. Now King had two options, either dying for what he believed in or to lie and save his own life. If he would of lied and said that he did not protest against, only to save his own life, everyone else would of thought that he is a hypocrite and they should no longer continue to fight for their own rights, since someone who has given them motivation to fight for these rights denied that he did not have any part in protesting. He will no longer be viewed as a leader who wants to end segregation against the African-Americans but as someone who is a coward for not dying for what they believe in. The famous Mahatma Gandhi once said that “To believe in something, and not to live it, is dishonest” which is completely true. If you believe that dying for, not only your rights but the rights of other people like you is right, but you do not fully live to these beliefs then you are not only being dishonest to yourself but also to others around you who see you as in inspiration. There is really no sense in having a belief and not fully living up to those expectations.

4. There is only one way to correctly interpret the Bible

I do not think that there is one way to correctly interpret the Bible. Many different religions have arisen from stories told from the Bible such as Christians, Catholicism, Judaism, Buddhism and so forth. Since these different religions have come from their own interpretation of the Bible, then there is obviously not one way to correctly interpret it. For example Catholics believe in not only God and Jesus but also in the Virgin Mary and other saints, while the Christians believe in only God and Jesus and not in worshiping the saints. Jewish people only believe in God however they are still waiting for the Messiah, basically, they do not believe that Jesus was sent by God, they believe he was one of the Apostles. These religions have their own beliefs from what they interpreted from the Bible. Everyone has their own way of interpreting the Bible; no one will have the same interpretation since there are no two people alike. If there was only one correct way to interpret the Bible then there would not be different religions and everyone will have the same interpretation of the Bible. There would be no sense of individuality since we would only have to think that the first person who “correctly” interpreted the Bible was right. Our own interpretation of the Bible allows others to try to see our views and why we have that belief, if everyone had the same interpretations then we would all live in a boring world where we are not allowed to have our own interpretation of the Bible, therefore new religions would cease to exist, and everyone would follow the same religion, unless if they do not believe in religion. There is truly no correct or incorrect way of interpreting the Bible. The way you interpret the Bible can come from your values, beliefs, religion and how you were raised. Therefore anyone who says that the Bible can only be interpreted in one way is utterly wrong and obviously does not believe that no one should be allowed to have their own interpretation of beliefs.

5. That which doesn’t destroy us only makes us stronger.

I believe that this is a true statement. During our lifetime we will be placed in situations where we have to make difficult decisions or situations that can hurt us in the end. These are life lessons that everyone will experience and these lessons are not given to us to “destroy” us, they are given to us to make us stronger in a sense. There are some people though who experience life lessons that think “destroys” them but after they fully understand why what happened to them happened, it will make them stronger in the long run. Also once they realize that they have experiences situations similar to those of which they think “destroyed” them, they will come to realize that they have overcome these feelings before and thus this makes them much wiser, and able to do more in the world. For example, people who have suffered from terrible illnesses for almost a majority of their life like leukemia or Breast cancer were once at a point where this disease could possibly kill them. However there have been people who have survived these two of many diseases are originally meant to kill people who can no longer sustain treatment. These survivors are much stronger than they were prior to being in a sense cured. They have a better outlook on life and are much wiser. Therefore, the statement “that which doesn’t destroy us only makes us stronger” is true because we do become stronger once we have overcome situations in which we think we will not get past. As humans it is in our natural nature to think that when we are placed into difficult situations that we think we will not overcome, but when we realize that we have either gone through a similar situation before or possibly the same situation we do have the power within us to surpass these obstacles. This not only makes us a stronger person but also wiser, physically and emotionally stronger, and we are capable of taking on experiences like these if they were to happen again.

6. It’s more difficult to forgive yourself if the person you have hurt doesn’t forgive you

I do not agree with this situation of it being difficult for us to forgive ourselves if the person you have hurt does not forgive you. As humans we are all ashamed of what we have done, if it has hurt someone and if you know what you did to that person to hurt them was completely wrong and you have asked for forgiveness, and that person just refuses to give it to you, I feel that it will be must easier to forgive yourself and when the person comes to the realization that you were sincere in your forgiveness they will let you know. I say this because sometimes that other person you have hurt will not want to give nor accept your forgiveness. They feel within themselves that you just do not deserve their forgiveness, and there is no wrong in the person you have hurt wanting to feel that way. However, if you truly believe that you did wrong in hurting them, you should not continue to punish yourself for it and learn to accept the fact that the other person does not want to forgive you. Forgiving yourself would be easier for someone to do rather than continuing to punish themselves for it. I do not believe that forgiving yourself is harder to do if the other person has yet to forgive you. Why should you not forgive yourself if you know what you did was wrong? If you absolutely understand your actions then it is easier to forgive yourself. However if you think what you did was not wrong at all then it would be harder to forgive yourself, especially If the other person sees that you have no remorse for the actions you did towards them. They will feel like they are not as important to you and will make them want to forgive you even less. Therefore before you even try to forgive yourself, you must first realize what you did was wrong, ask the person to forgive you and if they do not find it in themselves to forgive you then you must forgive yourself when you think the time is right. Once that other person sees that you were sincere in your forgiveness they will come to the realization to accept it.

7. Courage means doing something even though it can be difficult and fearsome.

I do believe in this statement that courage means doing something even though it is difficult and fearsome. If you have no courage inside of you then you are not willing to do anything for yourself or for anyone. If you live without courage then you are sort of living a boring life. When you do something that is difficult and fearsome you are opening your mind to new situations that you never knew of before when you did not want to do anything courageous. Majority of us have a fear of different phobias. For example, let’s say you have arachnophobia, if one day you decide that you want to hold a spider or come close to one then you are doing something courageous that you thought you could not do. Also when you do courageous things you find yourself to have more strength in yourself. Most people I know have a fear of heights and if they want to get rid of that fear they have, they do courageous things like skydiving to remove that fear and maybe they will have a newfound love for skydiving. Doing courageous things opens us up to new opportunities we did not know of before when we were afraid of trying new things. Another example could be everyone who serves in the Military. My brother Charles serves in the military and sometimes says that it can be difficult. However he knows that he is fighting for everyone in America to live in freedom and that is viewed as courageous. Not everyone wants to go to war and fight for our country. The people who actually do probably have a fear of actually fighting in a war, but they still do it because they want to be courageous and do something they think is difficult. Like I said previously, when you do something out of your comfort zone you are expanding yourself to do more things and find more strength in something you thought you could not do before. I do believe that courage means doing something even though it is difficult or fearsome.

8. A person is innocent until proven guilty.

I do not believe that a person is innocent until proven guilty. I believe that everyone is guilty of something they know they did is wrong; however they must be proven innocent. I think it is much harder to prove someone innocent if you know that they are guilty of a wrongdoing. If someone knows that they are guilty of a crime, it will soon be found out by the court of law. If someone if innocent and they know they cannot find real hard evidence against them, then they will not have the worry of the court finding evidence against them. For example the Casey Anthony case. Casey Anthony was accused of killing her two year old child Caylee Anthony. In this case she was proven innocent which obviously the verdict was wrong. All the evidence they found pointed her to be the murderer of her child. However it was her lawyer who made the jury and judge believe that she did not do it. Casey Anthony knows that she is guilty for the murder and she must live with the consequences since the court of law could not correctly give her “punishment.” However this does not change the fact that she is guilty. She could have been founded innocent if there had been absolutely no evidence against her, but her lawyers knew how to contradict that evidence which is why she was proven not guilty. The prosecutors had evidence that could be traced back to Casey Anthony, however since the case is now over if they want to have a re-trial they must find new evidence that was not displayed in the last trial to try to reconvict her. If you are innocent, and are said to be guilty of a crime, in the end it will be revealed that you were indeed innocent from the beginning. However it is much harder to prove this because in most cases if you are declared guilty of a crime you have to find ways to destroy any evidence that could be traced back to you and if you get caught doing that it will have a more severe impact on you. There I believe that a person is not innocent until proven guilty. I think a person is guilty until proven innocent. It is much harder to build a case on someone, if they have all this evidence that pinpoints them guilty of the crime they have committed, to try and prove them innocent.

9. Beliefs in opposition to common values should be illegal

I do not believe that beliefs in opposition of common values should be illegal. I think that this statement is absurd and whoever thinks this is correct is completely wrong. Imagine living in a country where our beliefs of common value are illegal. We would probably all live boring lives because we all have to have the same beliefs as everyone else and not be able to express ourselves. We live in a country where our own opinions of our values are able to be expressed freely, and if this is illegal then they are going against the first amendment but also depriving us of a right that we all received once a citizen of this country. I believe that if our beliefs of our common values become illegal we will not be able to express ourselves freely and would probably regret being citizens of this country. Majority of the people who come to America, look for that freedom that separates them as individuals and if they see that this country that is supposed to be free, does not allow beliefs of common values they will no longer want to come to this country and receive the liberty they deserve. This will only make us feel like our personal values and beliefs are not as important as the person who set the basis for how our beliefs in common values should be. If this were to happen then we would not only would the government be depriving us of our liberty and freedom to have our own beliefs but they would also be taking away a right that was given to us when the Bill of Rights was given to us. Therefore I do not believe that our beliefs to common values should be illegal, everyone has their own beliefs depending on their values, religion, race and the way they were raised. If this were to ever become illegal then what is the point of the American dream?

10. Justice is best determined in a court of law.

I do believe that justice is best determined in a court of law. In a court of law there are judges, prosecutors and defense attorneys and a jury. These people have one job to do, to either determine someone innocent or guilty, and I think that justice is best determined in a court of law. These lawyers are specially qualified to either persuade the jury if someone is innocent or guilty, while the juries’ job is to determine, based on the evidence provided in court, if the person who is being accused if innocent or guilty. For example, if there is a man who has committed over thirty murderers cross-country this case would best be determined in a court of law. Why should a man who has been driving through different states murdering countless woman and children be able to walk free while those victims’ families receive no justice? This justice will be received in a court of law, where they will prove him guilty of all the murders and have him convicted for them. If people believe that justice is not best determined in a court of law then majority of the prisoners in jail now, and the people that have been places on death road would have not received any “punishment” towards the crimes they committed and justice would have not been received by the victims or their families. Having justice received in a court of law is essential in our society, without it no one will receive justice for anything they deserve. The court of law is set up to remind us that without it, there would be no justice. The court of law is what helps convict guilty people of crimes they have committed and without it, half of our country would be running around with lunatics committing the same crime over and over again because there is nothing that will put an end to their heinous crimes, which is why the court of law is essential to our society. One who believes that not having a court of law to receive justice is wrong. Without it how will we be able to prove criminals guilty of crimes they committed for a consecutive number of months or sometimes years? Justice is best determined in a court of law, because there, the criminals will have to face trial and try to either prove himself as innocent or guilty, which will be the job if the jury to decide his conviction. If the jury chooses the right conviction for the criminal, then it is obvious that justice is best determined in a court of law.